United Nations S/2018/625

Security Council

Distr.: General
21 June 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 21 June 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that, under the presidency of Sweden, the Security Council plans to hold an open debate on children and armed conflict with the theme "Protecting children today prevents conflicts tomorrow" on 9 July 2018 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Irina **Schoulgin Nyoni**
Ambassador
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

18-10213 (E) 260618

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 21 June 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept note for the Security Council open debate on children and armed conflict, to be held on 9 July 2018

Protecting children today prevents conflicts tomorrow

1. The open debate will be focused on how protecting children affected by armed conflict can contribute to conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

Protecting children and upholding their rights as building blocks for peaceful and sustainable societies

2. More than 20 years ago, in her report on the impact of armed conflict on children (A/51/306), which led to the introduction of the children and armed conflict agenda, Graça Machel concluded that the most effective way to protect children was to prevent the outbreak of armed conflict. While the Security Council may not be able to resolve all conflicts that it currently considers, it can strengthen the protection of children who are suffering as a result of them. The children and armed conflict agenda provides the tools to end and prevent violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law committed against children affected by armed conflict, and to hold perpetrators accountable.

3. Protecting children today is key to preventing future conflict. How we treat children affected by armed conflict has a bearing on their future and that of their communities and countries. Shielding children from the worst effects of war will improve the chances of preventing new cycles of conflict and sustaining peace in the future. Building on the Secretary-General's prevention agenda, Governments, the United Nations and civil society need to do more to strengthen the links between child protection, the rights of the child and conflict prevention and sustaining peace. More action is also needed to empower children and young people to become actors in peace and conflict prevention.

Successful reintegration in the best interests of the child and of society

4. We need to prioritize the effective reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces or armed groups. By ensuring that every child in need has access to reintegration services, we can facilitate their return to a peaceful and productive life and break the cycle of conflict. However, reintegration does not take place in a vacuum, nor are former child soldiers the only people who need assistance to recover from the trauma of war. We need to ensure respect for the right to education — in particular for girls — and health care, including psychosocial support, for all children affected by armed conflict.

Peace processes as an important entry point for protecting children and building peaceful societies

5. In its resolution 1612 (2005), the Security Council called upon all parties to armed conflict to ensure that the protection, rights and well-being of children are specifically integrated into all peace processes and peace agreements. Even so, while children are often the most affected, their specific needs are often overlooked and their voices go unheard. Colombia and Nepal provide positive examples of how early commitments to protect children and their rights also worked as a confidence-building measure. To provide tools for actors involved in mediation and peace processes, and

in response to the request made in the statement by the President of the Security Council on 31 October 2017 (S/PRST/2017/21), a process to develop practical guidance on the integration of child protection issues into peace processes will be officially launched.

Questions

6. What can we do to:

(a) Promote and strengthen the links between child protection, the rights of the child and conflict prevention;

(b) Empower children and young people to become actors for peace and conflict prevention;

(c) Integrate the protection, rights and well-being of children into peace processes;

(d) Support Governments and regional and subregional organizations in building child protection capacity and formulate prevention strategies?

Format and briefers

7. The open debate will be held in the Security Council Chamber on 9 July 2018 at 10 a.m. The debate will be chaired by the Prime Minister of Sweden, Stefan Löfven.

8. Considering the large number of member States expected to participate in the open debate, all speakers are requested to limit their interventions in the Chamber to three minutes in duration. Member States will be able to upload longer versions of their statements for the record. Member States are also encouraged to speak in regional groups.

9. The following speakers will brief the Security Council:

- Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict
- Henrietta Fore, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund
- Yenny Londoño, civil society representative

Expected outcome

10. The aim is to adopt a resolution at the open debate.